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The Rājas were Kannaḍigas and under their rule the importance of Kannaḍa culture increased in Coorg at the expense of Malayāḷam. They were also Lingāyaṭs, who are staunch vegetarians and teetotallers, and possess a powerful and highly organized church of their own. Fifty-seven Lingāyaṭ *maṭhas* or monasteries, some of them heavily endowed, existed in north Coorg during Richter's time.[1]

The religion of the Rājas left its mark on the general population, and especially on Coorgs. The latter constituted the aristocracy under the Rājas, and a number of them held important posts at the Rājas' courts. Members of the royal family occasionally married Coorgs. The close contact which Coorgs enjoyed with the Rājas certainly helped in the spread of the culture and religion of the latter.

Many Coorgs even today adorn their foreheads with three horizontal, finger-wide, stripes of *vibhūti* or sacred ashes, a mark used by devotees of Shiva in all parts of India. Coorg folksongs frequently refer to a man or woman praying to Shiva soon after getting up in the morning. Most of the important temples visited by Coorgs are Shaivite in character.

VII

The annexation of Coorg by the British in 1834 marks the beginning of the operation of vast political, economic, social, and ideological forces on the people of that tiny province. For instance, the British gave *jagirs* or assessment-free lands to those Coorgs who had helped them in the suppression of the Canara Rebellion of 1837, and later these were allowed to be treated as gifts to the individuals concerned and not to their joint families. Traditionally, the joint family was the unit which owned land, and individuals owned only a little cash and a few movables. But by 1870, less than forty years after the annexation of Coorg by the British, some individual Coorgs had acquired for themselves farms and coffee plantations. Richter applauds the change:

> . . . these individual enterprises seem to be the natural transition to an impending general social reform—the breaking up of the great houses, and the independent establishment of each married couple residing near their own paddy-fields, and eating the fruit of their own labour. The

[1] Op. cit., pp. 175-6.

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indolent will then have to work for subsistence or sink into misery, the industrious and thrifty will prosper and after a period of no little angry strife a happier life of personal freedom and domestic felicity will be the inheritance of future generations. [1]

One of the first reforms introduced by the British was the abolition of slavery. Every high-caste landholder had apportioned to him, from ancient times, one or more families of slaves according to the size of his estate. These slaves belonged to a very low caste like the Poleyas. The legal abolition of slavery did not, however, materially affect the landholders, many of whom were Coorgs. But when, in the fifties of the last century, coffee plantations were opened up all over Coorg and there was a sudden demand for coolie labour, many of the slaves deserted their former masters to work for cash wages on the plantations. It was only then that the condition requiring a person holding land on the *jamma* tenure not to sublet his land was relaxed to the extent of permitting him to sublet a fourth of his estate.

Before the coming of coffee, rice was not only the staple crop, but also the chief commercial crop, as not many people owned the evergreen forests where cardamom throve. The cultivation of rice was the most important concern of every landholding joint family and its slave-families. Excess of rice was disposed of in Malabar where articles not available in Coorg were bought.

As a food crop rice has an intrinsic importance which no purely commercial crop can adversely affect, but coffee soon took a place next only to rice in its importance. It is necessary to mention here that the cultivation of coffee, in the beginning at any rate, was subject to the hazards of destruction by pests like the 'bug' and 'borer'. It was also bound up with the vagaries of a world market.

Coffee changed the face of Coorg. It brought in European planters who settled down all over Coorg; it cut the bonds binding the slaves to their traditional masters; it induced the seasonal inflow of labour from Mysore and South Canara, and finally it brought money to the planter as well as to the labourers on the plantations and to the total community.

The annexation of Coorg by the British did not mean a complete break with past administration. The British administrative system was at first based on the old system, and the modifications intro-

[1] Op. cit., p. 130.

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with having deserted Kāvēri for Kanaké, a semi-divine woman, who later assumed the form of a river, joining the Kāvēri at Bhāgamandla. This annoyed Agastya who cursed his disciples, 'Brahmins of Matsyadēsha [traditional name for Coorg in the Sanskritic myths], let not the people of this land obey you. Let them not give you enough to support you.' The distressed disciples appealed to Mother Kāvēri against her husband's curse. She took pity on them and told them that so long as they believed in her they would not find it difficult to support themselves.

In November 1834 some Amma Coorgs donned the sacred thread at Balmuri on the banks of the Kāvēri. They became followers of the Brahmin monastery (*maṭha*) in Rāmachandrapura in Shimoga District in Mysore State. In 1847 the head of this monastery sent them instructions as to the ritual they were entitled to perform. Amma Coorgs from Kiggaṭnāḍ who had not donned the sacred thread in 1834 did so a few years later at the Irpu temple under the auspices of the Brahmin monastery at Kānūr in Uḍipi in South Canara. Sometime afterwards a few Amma Coorgs who still remained unattached to a monastery became disciples of the monastery at Subramaṇya in South Canara.[1]

Amma Coorgs exemplify a tendency which has always been present in the caste system: a small group of people break off from a larger whole of which they are a part, Sanskritize their customs and ritual, and achieve a higher status than their parent-body in the course of a few decades.

The main body of Coorgs do not contain any subdivisions today, but formerly, during the time of the Rājas, they were divided into two groups called 'Saṇṇa' and 'Malla' Coorgs. These are Kannaḍa, and not Koḍagi, terms, and elderly informants say that these terms were used only by the Kannaḍa-speaking outsiders and not by Coorgs themselves. This sounds somewhat far-fetched, though there does not seem to have been a sharp line dividing the Saṇṇa and Malla Coorgs. 'Saṇṇa' in Kannaḍa means 'small', and 'Malla' means 'big', and the terms were derived from the two different varieties of rice, one big and the other small. The latter variety is superior to the former, and Saṇṇa Coorgs regarded themselves as superior to Malla Coorgs.

Richter tells us that 'Saṇṇa Coorgs may originally have formed a small nucleus connected with their Nāyakas or chiefs who were

[1] N. Chiṇṇappa, *Paṭṭōlé Paḷumé*, pp. 20–21.

prevails between the higher castes and Poleyas. For instance, Poleyas may not come out of their huts during the first eighteen days of the biennial festival of the deity Kētrappa at Bēngūr. It is believed that they will suffer some misfortune if they come out and see the festival-priests (*kāvukāras*) going about their sacred work.

Quite the opposite attitude prevails towards Poleyas at the festival of the Bhadrakāḷi of Kunda. The Poleya oracles have many duties at the festival, though they are not permitted to enter the temple of Bhadrakāḷi. They may not touch a high caste person, but they have the right of barring anyone from entering the temple. They stopped me presumably because they considered my dress—I was wearing a suit—improper, and they let me in only after a Coorg friend had explained who I was.

Ritual occasions might either emphasize the structural cleavages that normally exist between high and low castes, or they might tend to minimize them. The former leads, among other things, to the exclusion of the lower castes from ritual, while the latter leads to their inclusion. But inclusion does not mean that structural distance is abolished totally for the duration of the ritual occasion. What happens may be more accurately described by stating that certain individuals belonging to the low castes have ritual roles which place them temporarily in a superior position *vis-à-vis* the high castes.

At an ancestor-propitiation in a Coorg house, a Baṇṇa acts as oracle: he is possessed by each of the ancestor-spirits in turn, and while the possession lasts, he is identified with the particular ancestor possessing him. As the temporary vehicle of the spirit of an ancestor he is entitled to say and do things which he normally would not dream of saying and doing. As ancestor, he might censure the head of the joint family for not attending to his duties properly.

Nowadays young Coorgs who are sceptical about their traditional beliefs tend to see the Baṇṇa oracle at an ancestor-propitiation as an actor playing several roles in a play, and not as the vehicle of the spirits of their ancestors. A young Coorg told me that he had seen a Baṇṇa oracle saluting a big official while he was alleged to be possessed by an ancestor-spirit, and this was proof to him of the fact that all possessions were just make-believe and not real.

Another Coorg youth told me that while he was witnessing an ancestor-propitiation at a friend's house, the Baṇṇa oracle, address-

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596 423 Until the beginning of the last century the immovable property of an *okka* was regarded as impartible, and property descended from one generation to another without being split up in the process. In this respect Coorgs differed from other Hindus and, consequently, Coorg agriculture escaped the two great drawbacks of agriculture elsewhere in India, the subdivision of land into minute holdings and fragmentation or scattering of holdings over a wide area.

All earlier writers on Coorg—Connor, Moegling, Cole, and Rice[1]—are unanimous in holding that the immovable property of a Coorg *okka* is traditionally impartible. But some time after the defeat of Tippu in the closing years of the eighteenth century, some Coorg *okkas* were permitted by the Lingāyaṭ Rājas,[2] used to the Hindu idea of partition, to divide off. The example of these Coorgs was followed by many others. Consequently, 'in 1858 the *takkas* [social heads] and headmen of the Coorgs represented that the loss and ruin occasioned to their ancient houses by this innovation [was very great], and the Judicial Commissioner in additional Special Appeal Suit No. 117 of 1858–9 passed a decree declaring that division was contrary to the ancient custom of Coorg'.[3] The fact that the ancestral property was impartible was responsible to a great extent for preventing the *okka* from splitting.

596 423 178 The British also encouraged, although indirectly, the idea of partition of the ancestral property. They granted, for instance, *jagirs* or assessment-free lands to Coorgs who had taken part in the suppression of the Canara Rebellion of 1837. These *jagirs* were granted to individuals and not to the *okkas* of which they were members.

Coorgs who were government officials under the British bought farms and coffee- and orange-gardens with their savings, and the law courts established by the British permitted these to be regarded as the property of the individual acquirer and not of the *okka* of

[1] Connor, *Memoirs of the Codagu Survey*, pt. ii, Bangalore, 1870, pp. 29–30; H. Moegling, *Coorg Memoirs*, 1855, p. 30; R. A. Cole, *Manual of Coorg Law*, secs. 115–17; L. Rice, *Mysore and Coorg*, vol. iii, p. 329.

[2] Rice tells us that the Lingāyaṭ Rājas encouraged the idea of partition in order to break up the huge joint families of Coorgs. The Rājas wanted to increase the area under cultivation and also, according to Rice, they disliked intensely the fraternal polyandry of Coorgs. Rice remarks, 'Coorgs still viewed any deviation from this ancient custom [of polyandry] with the greatest abhorrence.' Op. cit., p. 329.

[3] Cole, op. cit., secs. 160, 165, 182.

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which he was a member.[1] In addition to this, recent changes in Hindu law, which apply to Coorgs also, have been such as to encourage individual acquisition at the expense of the *okka*.

The ancient custom of Coorgs recognized individual property only to a very limited extent, and that too only in movables. For instance, the younger members of an *okka* could cultivate, in the non-paddy season, and after they had contributed their daily quota of work to the joint estate, crops like ginger and turmeric. When these were sold a share was given to the *okka* for having provided the land on which they were grown.

The encouragement given to the ideas of partition and individual acquisition, the uprooting of Coorgs from their ancestral estates owing to the new political and economic structure stretching all over India, and the growing appeal of individualist ideas to the people, are all adversely affecting the solidarity of the *okka*. The elementary family, which was a weak entity in the traditional structure, is emerging with greater distinctness nowadays.

IX

In a sense, only men are full members of the *okka*, but such rights as women do possess in it are of paramount importance to them, and the granting of these rights in the bridegroom's *okka* is the crucial point in the marriage ritual. The granting of rights to the bride in the groom's *okka* is accompanied by the severance of her connexion with her natal *okka*. But such severance is not complete and irrevocable. The entire process is symbolized in the transference of twelve pebbles from the bride's natal *okka* to her conjugal *okka*.

After marriage, then, a girl is a member of her conjugal *okka*, and her membership does not become extinct even if she becomes a widow. She is entitled to stay in her conjugal home and to be maintained out of its income. She has also the right to be buried after death in its burial-ground.

The bride is given membership in the groom's *okka*, and not rights in the groom's share in the ancestral property of his *okka*. The entire idea of an individual having a share in the ancestral property of his *okka* is a comparatively recent introduction into Coorg law. Traditionally, the immovable property of an *okka*

[1] G. Richter, *Manual of Coorg*, p. 130.

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at least in the first few years of marriage, is a much more important relative for a girl than even her husband. And this relationship is basically one of conflict. A girl is also in a relation of conflict with her husband's sisters, married as well as unmarried, and with her husband's brother's wives.

The conflicts between the women in the patrilocal *okka* strike at its solidarity. Elsewhere in south India where partition is easy, they lead to division of the joint family. But in Coorg where the *okka* is a very strong entity, and where partition is legally forbidden, they make the harmonious working of the *okka* extremely difficult.

Besides the conflicts mentioned above, certain lines of cleavage in the *okka* are obvious. The distinction between the sexes, which is present in the whole of the society, is also present in every unit of it. So is the distinction between members of different generations. Enormous emphasis is laid on seniority, and this is visible not only between members of different generations, but also between members of the same generation. The younger member has to behave deferentially towards the older.

Before the introduction, in however grudging a form, of the principle of partition, and of the new ideals associated with industrialization and Westernization, the elementary family was not a powerful unit. It obtained only a grudging recognition in ritual, which was quite consistent with its relative lack of emphasis in the total structure. A tendency of recent times is the strengthening of the elementary family at the expense of the *okka*. The elementary family is increasingly becoming the real residential, commensal, and economic group with certain ties with the *okka* from which it is emerging, or has just emerged.

The existence of these divisions inside the *okka* did not prevent it from acting as a unit in relation to other *okkas*. The *okka* was the basic unit of society, and certain offices like the headmanship of the village, *nāḍ*, and the local temple traditionally ran in certain *okkas*. Again, contribution to collective tasks was on the basis of the *okka*. For instance, each local high caste *okka* had to send at least one man and one woman for every Coorg wedding in the village. Similarly, it had to send representatives to the festival of the village-deity, and for repairing roads and building bridges. All the adult men in an *okka* were required to attend a collective dance or hunt.

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of the dead person. This statement receives additional support from the fact that no ritual mourning is observed for an infant: only the parents of the dead infant take a bath and change their robes after the corpse has been buried. An elder, unlike an infant, is socially important and has a voice in the affairs of his *okka* and village. Ritual mourning is quite different from grief at the death of the person in question. The parents of the infant might be steeped in sorrow, while the death of a decrepit and senile elder might actually mean very little grief. Still, in the former case no ritual mourning is observed, whereas in the latter case it might be prolonged to the sixteenth or twenty-eighth day.

Elderly Coorgs say that mourning periods are becoming shorter, and this is not surprising as the kin-groups are becoming smaller and the old values are giving place to new ones. Formerly *māda* was usually performed, for an elder, on the twenty-eighth day and *not* on the sixteenth. *Mādam* in Tamil means 'month', and there are twenty-eight days in a lunar month.

As has already been mentioned, the performance of *māda* puts an end to ritual mourning for all excepting the surviving spouse and eldest son. These two have to observe ritual mourning until they have performed *dikshé uttuva* (untying of mourning), which is usually a few weeks, if not months, after *māda*. Between *māda* and *dikshé uttuva* the two most important mourners do not perform any rites, but merely observe some of the food taboos and wear mourning dress.

Speaking very broadly, the length of the mourning period is an index of the closeness of the bond prevailing between the dead person and the mourners. This holds good for birth-pollution too: while pollution ends for all relatives on the twelfth day, it ends for the mother on the sixtieth day. The mother-child bond is the closest of all kinship bonds, and this fact finds expression in the mother being subject to birth-pollution longer than everybody else.

VII

Senior relatives of the dead person do not play an active part in ritual mourning. This does not, however, mean that they are completely exempt from it, especially those who are members of the same house as the dead person. As members of the pollution house (*tiké mané*), they may not salute anyone, nor allow anyone to

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593 596 585 The two groups of kindred are brought together by the acquisition of two objects of common interest.

While the *mūrta* part of marriage refers to the creation of a new bond between two individuals and the kin-groups in which each of them is born, *sammanda* defines and clarifies the new structural situation which has come into existence. It brings home to the participants that a new legal situation has arisen, that an individual has been transferred from one *okka* to another. *Sammanda* ritual is performed whenever such a structural and legal alteration is brought about. (See 'Table of *Sammanda* Rights' on pp. 173–5.)

1. The *sammanda* ritual performed at *kanni mangala* ('marriage of a virgin'), which is, incidentally, the most frequent type of marriage performed, confers on the bride rights of membership in the groom's *okka*.

[587] 2. (*a*) When a widow wants to marry a brother of the late husband, no fresh *sammanda* need be performed as no new legal situation has come into existence. The girl is a member of the second husband's *okka* even before marriage and she continues to be one after marriage.

593 596 421 178 When a girl marries in the *kanni mangala* way she acquires rights of membership in the *okka* of her husband. This is a simple enough fact, but in recent years the acquisition of property by individuals for themselves and not for their *okkas* has confused the issue. A few educated Coorgs have tried to maintain that a girl, on marriage, acquires only a share in her husband's share of the ancestral property, and consequently, when a widow marries the husband's younger brother, a fresh *sammanda* has to be performed. This is absurd. The whole idea of individual ownership of immovable property is recent in Coorg, and even more important is the fact that *sammanda* is more than the acquisition of rights in property. It is the acquisition of membership in an *okka*, with all its consequences, social, economic, legal, and ritual.

593 596 587 (*b*) When a widow wants to marry someone who is not a member of her late husband's *okka*, she is first of all made to sever her connexion with it, and such severance restores her to her natal *okka*. She is then given *sammanda* in her second husband's house.

[768] (*c*) The children of the widow are (usually) members of their *father's okka* except in certain cases which will be mentioned presently.

593 596 586 3. When a woman is divorced she loses her membership in her

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already and accompanied by the band of the bride's house. The leader of the groom's party is asked to cut down a row of six plantain stems, whereas other relatives are asked to cut down only a row of three stems. The bride's party is treated similarly at the groom's house later.

The fathers of the bride and groom do not meet at marriage. Within a year of the performance of the marriage the bride's natal *okka* invite the groom's father to a feast and the groom's *okka* invite the bride's father to a feast. This is known as 'knowing the relatives' (*bendu ariva*).

The formality which surrounds the relations of the affinal groups lessens with the years. The two groups concerned come together more and more as the years advance and children are born of the marriage. But the formality never totally disappears. Distance and respect may be said to characterize affinal relations for ever. The earlier occasions in which they come together are covered with ritual—ritual respect is scrupulously shown, feasts are given, and gifts are exchanged.

Respect should be shown to parents-in-law, and this is especially required from a girl towards her mother-in-law. A girl does not come very much into contact with her father-in-law, whereas she spends the best part of the day with her mother-in-law, working under the latter's supervision in or about the kitchen.

XIII

The parents of a girl have a right to recover the presents of cloth and vessels which they gave their daughter at her marriage if the girl dies without leaving behind any children in her conjugal *okka*. But if children have been born of the marriage, the mother's personal property goes to them.

The legal position is not, however, as clear as we have made it out to be owing to the fact that lawyers trained in Hindu law have regarded the presents given to the bride by her natal *okka* as *stridhana* (woman's wealth), according to which the movable property presented to a bride by her relatives becomes her own property absolutely. If such an interpretation is accepted, the presents given by Coorg parents to their daughter at her wedding will come to be governed by the same laws as those prevailing among high-caste Hindus all over India. This seems to be another

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instance of the silent and effective transformation of an original Coorg custom into a similar, though not identical, Sanskritic custom.

A girl ought to get married and become a mother, and a mother is honoured among Coorgs. The bond between a mother and child is the most intimate of bonds and this fact expresses itself in ritual. While other relatives, including the infant's father, become free from birth-pollution on the twelfth day, the mother becomes free from pollution only on the sixtieth day. The stronger the bond prevalent the longer is the period of pollution, and this is so in birth as well as death.

When an infant whose milk teeth have not appeared dies, it is buried without ceremony, and a half of a coconut shell containing milk from the mother's breast is kept over the grave. Only the mother is required to take a bath and change into pure clothes.

The special importance of the maternal bond is recognized at marriage also: the mother is the first person to perform *mūrta* to the bride or groom, provided she is not a widow. The mother has to give her money-gift enclosed in a purse, and this is tied to the frontal breast-knot of the bride's *sari*.

It is not only in ritual that the strength of the mother–child bond is acknowledged: a number of proverbs testify to its strength. One compares the motherless child to a crop in drought. Another tells us that the father becomes a firebrand after the mother is dead. In proverbs the mother is the tender figure and she contrasts with the father who is comparatively lacking in affection and fickle. He can be trusted only as long as the mother is alive, and once the mother dies, his affection for his children decreases. He is likely to take up another wife who will be the focus of his interest and attention.

The dependence of children on their mother later gives way to great regard and respect for her, and this fact complicates the husband–wife relationship. A man does not like his wife's criticizing his mother, and even if he discovers that his mother does not treat his wife properly he would be loath to intervene.

The bond prevalent between a mother and her daughter is always a very deep one, and has a great poignancy because the daughter, on marriage, has to leave her natal home for her conjugal home. The mother is aware that her sons have all the rights, privileges, and power in the ancestral house, whereas her daughters have to leave their natal home and spend their lives among people who will, to say the least, be critical of her in the first few years.

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The daughter looks upon her natal home as a haven of refuge in the first few years of married life. Her first confinement takes place in her natal home because it is considered proper for the girl to be with people with whom she can be at ease.

A proverb tells us that 'the mother's love for her daughter rendered her unfit to live with her husband, the sitting hen's love destroyed the egg'. An overfond mother tries to drag her married daughter away from her husband, and this might eventually break up the marriage.

The elementary family, which is a part of the *okka* or joint family, is weakly structured among Coorgs. This is because the *okka* is so strong that it does not permit the elementary families inside it to be strong units. There is no separate term for the elementary family.

The solidarity of the elementary family does not obtain expression in ritual. It is true that the affinal tie is very strongly emphasized in mourning, and the eldest son is a mourner of the first grade, and sometimes a younger son or daughter is also called upon to become a first-grade mourner. But usually the younger children of the dead person are not distinguished from the other younger members of the *okka*.

The fact that the elementary family is weakly structured among Coorgs does not mean that it has no solidarity; and in the last 120 years its solidarity has been increasing at the expense of the solidarity of the *okka* of which it is a part. Coorg ancestral houses are large, sprawling affairs, and the members of each elementary family within an *okka* occupy either a room, or a couple of rooms, or an entire wing. Sometimes they occupy one of two or three houses belonging to the *okka*. A member of the M-*okka* once told me, 'When this house was built over seventy years ago there were only two or three people in it. But our ancestors were so wise that they built a large house with a number of rooms so that all their descendants could live in it.' Now each of the married brothers and his children occupy a room or a couple of rooms inside it.

The unity of the elementary families within the *okka* appears in certain non-ritual contexts. For instance, parents take sides with their own children against the children of another member of the *okka* in the frequent quarrels of children. A proverb tells us that 'the *okka* went to ruin over the children's talk'. Quarrels arise when 'the children of the *okka* play together, and these children's quarrels

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During the harvest festival a party of villagers go from house to house, and at each house they visit they sing the 'house song', which gives an account of the ancestors of that house. After the song is sung, the singers are treated to refreshments and given gifts of money.

The singers are required to visit the village-headman's house first. Similarly, the people who put on fancy dress during the harvest festival have to visit the village-headman's house first.

For a week before the beginning of the harvest festival all the adult males in the village gather together at the village-headman's house every evening before proceeding to the green to practise the dances and play some games. The guests are treated to a light repast, after which the headman asks someone to take up a *duḍi* (small drum) and sing. The person who is asked to sing may not refuse, and refusal is punishable by fine. Even the temple-headman is not exempt from this rule.

At the Kundat Bhadrakāḷi festival, the villagers frequently move about in processions during the last few days of the festival. At the head of these processions walks the *nāḍ*-headman's wife carrying a dish-lamp. A dish-lamp has ritual value, and it is essential on every ritual occasion, and it is the privilege of the *nāḍ*-headman's wife to carry it at the festival of Kundat Bhadrakāli.

The political and economic forces set in motion in the last 120 years have been responsible for certain structural inconsistencies coming to the surface during festivals. It was not always the headman's *okka* which benefited from the new economic and educational opportunities. The *okkas* which benefited from the latter could ignore with impunity the headman's position and authority. Frequently the headman accepted the changed situation, and this not only failed to solve the conflict for supremacy between him and the newly rich *okkas* but instead accentuated it. The latter, having secured wealth and official positions, tried to secure headmanship too. Disputes became frequent.

The breakdown of the traditional economy meant that frequently the headman could not fulfil the duties of hospitality periodically required of him; and when the headman was unable to perform his duties, he found it difficult to insist on others performing their duties towards him. People began to gravitate to the new centres of power, the officials and rich men.

Formerly, people used to take their disputes to their headman

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on the occasion of the festival of the local village-deity. Such a festival ensured the presence of a large number of elders, a fact which added to the weight and authority of any decision given by the headman. Even more important was the fact that people were generally afraid to perjure themselves before a deity, and this was specially so in the case of some deities like Appangiriyappa of Kāṭakēri, well known for the severe punishment which he inflicted on perjurors.

The success with which a headman was able to settle disputes also depended on his wealth, the spread of his kinship ties, and his reputation for impartiality. The impoverishment of some headmen in recent years and the breakdown of the traditional way of life have been responsible for undermining the authority of the headmen.

XI

Formerly, two or three neighbouring *nāḍs* came together occasionally to discuss matters of common concern. A folksong contains an appeal (*éyi koḍ*) to an assembly of the elders of two *nāḍs* from an assembly of the elders of a single *nāḍ*. Another folksong refers to the elders of three *nāḍs* meeting together.

The performance of certain calendar festivals such as the harvest festival requires the co-operation of several *nāḍs*. The ritual cutting of paddy sheaves constitutes the most important rite of the festival, and this has to be performed during a particular period on a particular day. Both the date and time of performance of the rite are decided only a fortnight before the festival by the astrologer of the Pāḍi Subramaṇya temple in Pāḍi village, who informs the assembled headmen of Pāḍināḷknāḍ of his decision. This is later conveyed to every *nāḍ*, village, and *okka*.

Coorgs everywhere in Coorg, with the exception of Kaḍiyetnāḍ people who performed the rite on a different day, accepted the decision of the astrologer of the Subramaṇya temple in Pāḍi. The acceptance produced uniformity in very many *nāḍs*. Such ritual uniformity provides common values and makes possible the integration of several *nāḍs* into a single community.

But it is chiefly Sanskritic Hinduism which provides Coorgs and other Hindus in Coorg with common values which transcend the barriers between *nāḍ* and *nāḍ*, and between caste and caste.

2: Emeneau L-5 (1936-1937) 1938
AW5 Coorg AW5

584 The marriage is at present arranged by the families of the young people. The family of the young man approaches the family of a girl who is considered a suitable match and after much discussion arrangements are made; the girl is informed of them and in most cases she acquiesces. The authority of the family is ideally supreme. Young people have many opportunities of meeting, or at least of seeing one another, and as we should expect, matches that are not likely to be endurable are tacitly avoided by the elders of the family. Cases are known however where a girl has refused the arranged marriage and for various reasons elder members of her family have agreed with her and prevented the marriage; cases are also known where a young man after suggesting for himself a particular girl and carrying with him most of the other members of his family has found opposition from an elderly female member who disapproves of the girl and he has had to give up his idea. Life in a joint family, as is well known in other parts of India, is a matter [596] of the adjustment of conflicting stresses. The evidence of the [593] marriage song seems to show that at some time in the past a young man went out himself to look for a suitable girl and settled 584 the matter himself, without reference to his family until the time 174 for the formal arrangement arrived. There is probably some 533 historical truth in the account, but the period at which this [114] was the custom is not known. Richter's account of 1870 implies, though it does not mention explicitly, a state of things like that at the present day.

584 When a marriage is to be formally arranged and fixed, the aruvē[1] of the young man's family accompanied by representatives of this family, e.g. the man's father, his elder brother, or a brother-in-law, go to the house of the girl's family. There they meet the aruvē and the representatives of the girl's family. Formally the man's party declare that he will marry the girl and the girl's [342] party that they will give the girl, and the aruvēs guarantee that [778] their respective parties will hold to the agreement. The ceremony is performed in the nellaki of the house, i.e. the portion of the central hall opposite the door, where a lamp hangs. It is regarded as the sacred part of the house and apparently the sanctity centers in the lamp, before which prayers are offered [595] in the evening to the ancestors of the sib (or nowadays to any other gods in addition). Most of the ceremonies to be described

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614 764 178 [1] Two sibs stand in mutual relationship to one another, so that each provides an aruvē for the other on certain ceremonial occasions. Their duties in connexion with marriage are described in the text. At a funeral the aruvē is present and seems to have been originally entrusted with supervision of the ceremonial. At present the office tends to become a mere formality and the aruvē does not necessarily come from the traditional sib. The man of the traditional sib is called maṇṇaruvē 'land-aruvē'; one who is engaged for the occasion only is ponnaruvē 'gold-aruvē' and this term seems to carry with it some derogatory connotation.

2:Emeneau L-5 (1936-1937) 1938
AW5 Coorg AW5

are performed at the nellaki. After this formal arrangement of the marriage neither party may withdraw from their agreement.

As soon afterwards as all the preparations have been made, a variable period but seldom more than a month or two later, the wedding takes place. The Coorg season for weddings is between the end of the paddy-harvest and the breaking of the S.-W. monsoon, i.e. during the months of April and May. In ancient times any other period was inconvenient and even with the advent of transportation by motorbus and automobile no change has taken place. The day for the marriage is frequently fixed nowadays by an astrologer (kaṇiĕ), and the song gives ample recognition to this, though in this it may reflect the conditions of the last few centuries rather than of more ancient times. The ceremonies take place at the houses of the bride and bridegroom respectively. Ideally these should be the traditional central houses of the respective sibs (called aynumane). In very many cases however these houses are most inaccessible and perhaps not even occupied, and in such cases the actual dwelling-houses of the families are the scene of the ceremonies.

The wedding ceremonies are now to be described. On the first day each of the two persons to be married goes through the mu:rta ceremony in the house of his or her family. It is essentially a ceremony in which the person is blessed and prosperity and fertility are ensured by the sprinkling of rice on the person and feeding him or her with milk by the members of his or her father's and mother's sibs. Early on the following morning the bridegroom arrives at the bride's house. Rice is again sprinkled and milk fed, to the bridegroom by members of the bride's father's sib, to the bride by members of the bridegroom's father's sib. Then follows the sammanda ceremony, by which the bride is made a member of her husband's sib. This is the essential ceremony of the marriage. The bride is then conducted from her house, being stopped as she leaves by her male cross-cousin, and is brought to her husband's house. There she performs the ceremony of carrying water into the house, as an earnest of the household duties that she will perform as a wife in this house. On that night the marriage is consummated. Details of the various ceremonies now follow.

On the first day of the wedding two separate but identical ceremonies called mu:rta are held, one at the bride's house the other at the bridegroom's. To each all the members of the respective sib and of the original sib of the mother of the central figure of the ceremony and all the members of the village sibs are invited. Preparations for the affair, cooking, cleaning and the like, have previously been made by the members of the house assisted by the closest or even by all of the sib-members. The bridegroom bathes on this morning in the bath-house; seven married women, who are not widows, from among his relatives, e.g. his sisters, his mother's and father's sisters, his uncles'

2: Emeneau L-5 (1936-1937) 1938
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585
[515] [602] wives, but not his brothers' wives, unless they are much older than himself,[1] must pour over him one pot of water each. After this he is arrayed in full Coorg dress, including the turban, dagger, and sword, and puts on heavy bangles and neck-chains. His [515] long coat (kupia) should be white, as all such garments were anciently. The bride likewise is bathed by women and girls [602] from among her relatives, no one being barred from this office [292] except widows. She is dressed in her best sari and headcloth and [301] decorated with a great number of ornaments, toe and finger rings, earrings, necklaces and chains, and hair-ornaments. When the guests have all arrived in the early morning (all wearing Coorg dress, though the men need not wear white coats), the bride and groom in their respective houses are brought forth [292] into the nellaki. Each is wearing in addition to their full dress a cloth over the head, the bride's covering her face but left unfastened in front. Each, conducted by a near relative or friend of the same sex (in the man's case frequently the husband of his sister, in the woman's the wife of her brother), circles three times in clockwise direction a stool between two standing lamps and then is seated facing to the east on the stool, which has been [342] covered with a cloth. The nellaki was anciently the place for the [778] ceremony; at present it often takes place in the yard of the house [178] in a pandal built for the occasion and fitted with the stool and two standing lamps, but not with a hanging lamp. This shift of [533] scene is due to the fact that the house is frequently too small to accommodate all the guests. During the ceremony four Coorg musicians beat on drums and sing the wedding song (this I hope to present and discuss linguistically elsewhere).

[614] When the central figure of the ceremony is seated, his or her mother, or if the mother is dead or a widow, the eldest married woman in the sib who is not a widow, stands in front [782] of him or her. She takes from a large flat plate of rice a handful and throws some first to the hanging lamp, apparently as an offering to the ancestors of the sib (if the ceremony is outside in the pandal, this is omitted), then over her head towards the sun;

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[807] [1] Younger ones are said to be restrained by shyness, but the fact is that they are women who are referred to as macini and are possible spouses of the man, in case they should be widowed and he should become a widower. Such relatives of a man, viz. all those whom he classes as macini and mammā, whether they are blood-relations (i.e. cross-cousins) or related merely by marriage, are the subjects of taboos with relation to him. They begin to operate when both parties have attained puberty. They may not touch one another, except in case of real necessity, nor may they sit on the same bench. Other specific taboos operating between [605] these cross-cousins seem to be lacking, since in general Coorg men and women observe about the same taboos in speech and action that are [834] observed in polite circles in western society. The specific taboos do not operate between any other classes or relatives; it may be observed that the taboo on touching is merely a very small extension of the usual reluctance of a Coorg man to touch a woman.

2:Emeneau L-5 (1936-1937) 1938
AW5 Coorg AW5

with both hands then a little is sprinkled on the seated person successively at the joints of knees, elbows and shoulders, and finally on the head. Then she takes a small brass vessel (called kundi) with a long spout, which is filled with milk, puts the spout through the open front of the veil to the mouth of the person, who drinks a little. Then she puts some money contained in a small bag into the hand of the person, and nowadays at least sprinkles rice into his lap, though this is unnecessary. The groom or bride then bends forward and three times touches the feet of the mother, after each touch putting the joined hands to his or her forehead. During this salutation the mother puts both hands on the child's head in blessing and ends by joining her hands and bringing them to her forehead. The mother is followed by all female relatives in some approach to an order by seniority and by the female guests in turn, and each goes through the same ceremony, the only difference being that gifts are presented without being enclosed in a bag. Widows are not debarred from performing the ceremony. If the female is younger than the bride or groom, the salutation made by touching the feet is performed by the guest and not by the bride or groom. After the women have finished, the men do the same thing, the first being the father, or if he is dead, the eldest male member of the sib, followed by the other male members of the sib in some approach to order by seniority and by other relatives and the male guests. The bride or groom is then conducted from the nellaki or from outside the house to his or her own room, and all the relatives and guests proceed to feast, first the men, then the women, and finally the servants of the house (who belong to the Holeya [poleyĕ] caste).

After the feast the guests are dismissed with the usual salutations (generally an abbreviated form of the salutation described above). Somewhat more formality attends the departure of the male members of the sib to which the mother of the bride or groom respectively originally belonged. They are conducted with music to the small pasture near the house and are seated there on mats. They are given betel and such light refreshments as sweets. Then a Coorg sword (odikati) is offered to the eldest member of this sib with an invitation to cut down three plantain stems that have been fixed in the earth. Since each stem is nearly a foot thick and cutting each across with one slanting blow is a matter of strength and knack, he usually hands the sword to some younger member of his party who cuts them. It is said to be mark of respect to offer the sword, and likewise a matter of honour to cut the stems cleanly. At present the whole affair is treated rather jestingly and it is said that foreign bodies are inserted into the stems to make the stroke a more difficult matter. The sword is a weighty and well-balanced weapon and those stems that I have seen after they were cut had been neatly and accurately severed with one blow.

Marriage Customs and Ceremonies

The marriage customs of the Coorgs are a curious medley of old and new rites, fashions and notions. Formerly, their marriage customs had a communal character. On an auspicious day, a family would call together the whole village, comprising all the families of the rice valleys occupying farm houses, for a feast. The youths would have their ears pierced by the village carpenters to wear ear-rings, and the maidens had rice strewn over their heads. This was called the marriage feast. The whole community feasted together and the younger people were at liberty to go in search of husbands and wives. This communal character has now changed. Young men express their desire to marry to their parents, grandparents, or the senior members of the family, who look out for suitable girls not in any way related to them. All consanguinous unions are prohibited. Among the prohibitions are:

(i) The descendants of the father's side of the same family name.

(ii) The descendants of the mother's sisters.

(iii) Paternal or maternal uncles or aunts.

A friend of each of the contracting parties becomes the intermediary or Aruva and he is the master of the ceremonies. The father of the young man or his elder brother with the Aruva goes to the house of the young woman, where their advent is expected. On a favourable response, the whole house is well swept and cleaned, and a lamp is lit, when the Aruvas on both sides with prominent members of respectable families stand before it, facing each other, and shake hands in token of the inviolable contract having been concluded. Such betrothals are seldom broken. If the bridegroom dies before consummation of the marriage, the bride becomes a widow. She is then entitled to an inheritance and sustenance in the bridegroom's family, and may enter into conjugal relations with his brother or first cousins.

The Coorg weddings generally take place in April and May, when the rice fields are dry and there is little to do. The day for the wedding is fixed in consultation with the local astrologer, and invitations are sent by the Aruvas to the relations of the bride and bridegroom, to the married Coorgs of the same village, to friendly neighbours of other castes, or even to Muhammadans.

On the wedding day at about 9 a.m. the invited guests assemble in festive array at the houses of the bride and bridegroom, and while the women go to the inside of the house and give a helping hand to the mistress, the men are accommodated in the spacious verandah or in temporary sheds in the courtyard and served with pansupari to assist the flow of village

3:Iyer E-5 (no date) 1948 AWs Coorg AW5

585 three pebbles which he binds to the hem of her garment. This is a token of sealing her right to her husband's property. The bridegroom then takes the bride by the hand and leads her out of the house. This act of possession forms the principal part of the ceremony.

[576] As a mark of respect, he makes his obeisance to those assembled by touching their feet. In like manner, the wife fetches a pot of water from the well to the kitchen and carries a basket of manure to the nearest field and then returns to her room to indicate her willingness to share in the labours of the house. The Aruva then takes the bridegroom to the room [551] of his wife, and thenceforth, while she remains in his house as his wife, [583] she bears a new name, but will always be called by a familiar one under the parental roof. The married daughter receives from her parents a certain dowry and a good bed, but thenceforth she has no claim on the family property.

585 178 In bygone days, there was a custom of so called cloth marriage. Kittel writes that a man gave a cloth to a girl, and she, accepting it, became his wife without any further ceremonies. He might dismiss her at any time [586] without being under the least obligation of providing either for her or the children born during connection. The custom was abolished by one of the [643] Lingayat Rajas, who being unable to obtain as many girls for his harem as he wished from wanton selfishness put a stop to it.

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596 generally well guarded in the use of proper expressions in their talk with the young. The educated men of the present day exercise a potent influence for good in the normal conversation, and show due respect to their [607] brother's wife with whom no familiarity is allowed. There is a tendency [178] at present among the discontented members to break up the ancestral family [578] by a division of the family property among the members.

Property and Disposal

423 The property of the Coorgs consists chiefly of the ancestral house
425 and the land belonging to it which under the Rajas was held on a feudal
177 tenure and on a light assessment termed *jamma bhumi* or birthright land, because it is inalienably vested in the family or house, and the British Government confirmed the settlement. Additional land was taken up by them on the *sagu* tenure, but, in course of time, Government allowed to some extent such *sagu* land to be converted into *jamma* land. Other land held as jagir was granted for certain Government service as *umbli* land on a light assessment. During the last thirty years, many houses have opened out coffee plantations on their own or Govern-
434 ment land, or rented cardamom jungles. Thus the actual wealth of the
421 Coorgs consists of landed property and their prosperity depends on the
596 exertions and means of cultivation; but imprudent enterprises and un-
[556] expected reverses have caused much embarrassment. Formerly, all the members of a Coorg house lived together in the ancestral home or in some outfarm, *koppu*, neither of which could be alienated nor subdivided among the members of the family. All of them worked for the common good under the management of the *yajamana* or *korakara*, and had their subsistence on the proceeds. Any surplus on the annual reckoning became
[433] the property of the house for providing incidental expenditure on the occasion of marriages, funerals, and other ceremonies, as also for the purchase of new land in the interest of the family. If, however, an individual member by becoming a salaried officer or by coming into possession of money through marriage, was enabled to enter upon private speculation without any aid from the ancestral house, any property or acquirements thus made became his private property and were left at his own disposal by gift or will. Many young men have thus become
[591] separated from the ancestral house and established a new homestead, and as
[182] long as they contributed to the expenses of the former, they maintained their share in the proceeds. This is the proper mode of setting up a new house. Disintegration is now setting in, and some try to break up the ancestral houses by a division of the landed property among the members.

Adoption

597 The right of adoption is given to every Coorg house in the absence of male issue, or by an unmarried man or woman or widower in order to secure the inheritance of personal property or rights.

Kinship

The system of kinship among the Coorgs is of the type called classificatory. The most important feature is the use of the same kinship terms for mother's brother and father-in-law on the one hand and for father's sister and mother-in-law on the other. The fundamental feature of the system is the application of the same kinship terms in addressing most persons of the same generation and sex. 601

Social Organization

The Coorgs have a council of elders called Takka Mukkyastam who act as the moral censors of their social affairs, though they are not invested with magisterial power by Government. The authority of the village Takkas extends over offences against social customs, non-attendance of public feasts, and improper conduct during the same, as for example, drunkenness. The offender has to appear before the village elders at the *ambala*, an open council room on the village green, where the matter is discussed. The presiding Takka pronounces the verdict which may amount to a fine of ten rupees. In the event of refusal to pay the amount, the offender may be excommunicated, when he may appeal to the district Takkas, and their decision is final. An outcaste Coorg may be reinstated on payment of the fine. The influence of the official class, and increasing knowledge of the law tend to subvert the authority of the Takkas, who relax their control by accommodating themselves to changed conditions, and do not venture on any excommunication. 623 692 [634] [178]

Funeral Ceremonies

The Coorgs bury their dead. The common people are buried in the village burial ground, and children in some reserved place near the home. Men of importance have a tomb built over their graves with a masonry bull, the emblem of Siva, surrounding it. When a man dies, messages are sent round to every house of the village community. Each house must at least send one male and one female member to render service on the occasion. The Aruva of the family has the direction of affairs of the ceremonies. Under his direction the corpse is washed and dressed by the man who has followed the funeral summons, if the deceased is a man, but if a woman, by the women. The handling of the dead by the funeral party does not ceremonially defile them. It is enough for them to bathe and change clothes on reaching home. The corpse is then carried to the hall and laid on a funeral bed near to which a lighted lamp is placed. The whole company gather round and break out in loud lamentations, beating the breast and tearing the hair. Guns are also fired in honour of the dead. Towards evening, the corpse is brought into the yard in an open bier, a little water is poured into its mouth by the relatives and a piece of money is deposited in a copper dish, containing a little coconut milk, saffron, rice 764 [203] [431]

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

[P. 111]

PREFACE.

THIS Manual aims at a truthful sketch of the past history and the present physical and political position of the interesting Province of Coorg which has for the last 36 years been under the sway of the British Government. 121

Great changes have taken place during this period. Coorg, though for a long time a jealously guarded *imperium in imperio*, had gradually to yield to the onward march of civilization, in spite of the antagonism of its conservative Headmen. Good roads in every direction opened up this once impenetrable mountain-girt tract, and numbers of enterprising British settlers with capital and national energy have already stamped a new character upon the country. By three opposite lines the electric wire has linked Coorg with the grand net of the South-Indian telegraph and consequently with Europe and far distant America. Education is firmly and extensively established, and the administration of the country compares most favourably with that of any well-governed province in India. 179 [178] [491] [648] [206] [871]

By the kind permission of the Superintendent and the Chief-Commissioner of Coorg, I had access for the compilation of this Gazetteer to all the official records bearing on the subject. Amongst these I have found the "Rájéndranáme" and the "Memoir of the Coorg Survey" of great service. The former contains the history of the Coorg Rájahs from 1633 to 1808, composed under the eye of Dodda-Vírájender, the hero of Coorg history. The latter was written by Lieut. Connor of the Royal Engineers in 1817. Though drawn up under the most untoward circumstances, it exhibits a clear and comprehensive insight into the state of Coorg half a century since and reflects great credit upon the intelligence and ability of that Officer. 129 [114]

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4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

132 ment. A peculiar ulcer-disease on the limbs has lately been
[164] rather prevalent about Virajpet, which is ascribed to impoverished blood, for want of nourishing animal diet.

The account which natives of Mysore or from the Western
[727] Coast give of the climate of Coorg is not favorable. They
[648] have experience on their side. Of the large number of people, whom Tippu sent from Mysore to replace the ancient inhabitants, or who during the various wars were carried off by the Coorg Rajahs from the neighbouring countries to cultivate
[167] their lands, but few survived the change. In our days the thousands of Mysore coolies who annually emigrate to work on the Government roads or on coffee estates stand the climate much better, care being bestowed upon them and a periodical return to their homes being rendered practicable.

241 **4. Cultivation of the principal productions.**

198 Native agriculture in Coorg, as elsewhere in India, is still carried on as it was centuries ago. A system of rural economy, formed at a remote period and transmitted for ages unchanged, is not likely to be disturbed by so conservative a people, as are the Coorgs.

243 *Rice* is the staple product of Coorg. The numerous valleys throughout the land have, from ancient times, yielded an unfailing supply every year for home consumption and for exportation to the Malabar Coast. The rice-valleys are most extensive in South-Coorg, in the neighbourhood of Virajpet and in Kiggatnád, where some fields are of considerable breadth and several miles in length; but owing to the surrounding low, deforested hills which yield little fertilizing detrition, the soil is of a quality inferior to those fields of the narrower valleys near the Ghats, where the ground is terraced at considerable pains, but every field large enough for the use of the plough. The lower and broader fields of a

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

356 The house and yard are generally kept clean and orderly,
574 and the announcement of an approaching honored visitor sets at once the broom into activity and you may arrive just in time to see the retreating Coorg damsel and have to swallow the raised dust. However, the object is attained, you perceive what attention has been paid to you.

312 A stone built deep well is usually in the compound or the
[515] water is fetched from a hole sunk by the side of the paddy-fields, and near the well is the hut for hot bathing.

357 The low caste servants have their huts at some distance
564 from the Coorg house; the meals given them they eat on
361 plantain leaves apart from their masters.
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As already remarked the Coorg house is the domicile of all the male relatives with their wives and children belonging
591 to one parental stock. The landed property, or Jamma-púmi,
423 is vested in the house and cannot be alienated from it, or divided amongst its members. The farm is cultivated by all
[476] the housepeople under the management of the master of the
[241] house, and the produce is divided amongst them after the Huttari feast. It often occurs, however, that an energetic member of the house or one in Government employment, acquires for himself some fields called Koppa, which are his own, and if sufficient for the support of his family, he may
591 live there and establish a new house. Others own a small
423 coffee plantation or cardamom-garden, and these individual
178 enterprises seem to be the natural transition to an impending general social reform—the breaking up of the great houses, and the independent establishment of each married couple residing near their own paddy-fields, and eating the fruit of their own labour. The indolent will then have to work for their subsistence or sink into misery, the industrious and thrifty will prosper, and after a period of no little angry strife a happier life of personal freedom and domestic felicity will be the inheritance of future generations. The only danger to be apprehended is the tendency of the rich houses absorb-

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ing the poor ryots and reducing them to a state of servitude. A wise Government will, however, watch with solicitude the spontaneous development of the reform, and the more it is the work of the people themselves, the surer will be its successful accomplishment.

591 423 178

b. Prescriptive law of inheritance.

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Sons, grandsons, brothers, brothers' sons, daughters, daughters' sons, cousins and adopted sons have the right of succession to inherit property successively in the order here mentioned. Property, in default of offspring, on the death of a man devolves on his widow; if he leaves a son under age, the widow is his guardian, and takes possession of the property. If the deceased leaves neither wife nor sons, but a grandson and a brother, or a brother's son, the property is divided, provided the family be undivided; but if it be divided the grandson takes possession of the whole property. The law of primogeniture, however, now prevails and division is strictly prohibited.

If the deceased leaves neither wife, nor children, nor grandsons, the property devolves on his brother or his brother's sons, if any, as the nearest relations. In cases where the deceased has left neither wife nor sons nor brothers, but a daughter not married, the relations of the family put her in possession of the property, and dispose of her in marriage, and on her death her husband or her sons inherit it. But if a man dies leaving a daughter not married, and a brother's son or a grandson, the family being undivided, the property used to be liable to a division. In failure of the preceding persons, the property used sometimes to descend to the cousins, and sometimes not, as the Government determined. In cases where the deceased leaves a son under age without relatives to protect him, the Government appoints the head of the village to act as guardian to the boy and to take charge of

429 428 [884]

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

429 his patrimony, until he attains his majority, which ranges
428 from 16 to 20 years, according to the maturity of judgment
[884] shewn by the individual, when he puts his ward in possession of it, and renders him an account of receipts and disbursements during the period of his nonage.

428 If the deceased has left no children, the widow adopts a
597 child of her relations, if procurable, or otherwise of her tribe, and he succeeds to the property on his attainment of the proper age, provided he has been adopted formally and according to the usage of the clan.

582 **c. Wedding and married life.**

[178] The marriage-customs of the present day present a curious mixture of old and new rites, fashions and notions.

In ancient times, it would seem, the marriage festivities had a peculiarly communal character. On some great day a family would call together the whole gráma (village), that is all the families of one of the rice-valleys, girt with farm-
[304] houses, to a feast. The youths would have their ears pierced
[335] by the carpenters for earrings, and the maidens had rice
[574] strewn upon their heads. This was in those days called the marriage feast. The whole community feasted together, and the young people were now at liberty to go in search of husbands and wives.

304 In the low country the piercing of the ear is generally
[17] performed by the goldsmith, except in out-of-the-way places, where a goldsmith is not to be found. In such a case another branch of the trade-fraternity, smith or carpenter, may act for
[335] the brother-goldsmith. In Coorg the carpenter has the exclusive privilege of piercing the ears for ornaments.

[582] The girls have their ears pierced in early childhood. When they come of age, the ceremony of putting on their heads some corns of rice is a token of their being free to marry.

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

The present marriage rites of Coorg, especially in Kiggatnádu, where bride and bridegroom are welcomed together by the relatives and fellow-villagers of both parties, and sit together on the wedding-chair, closely resemble the common fashion of the Hindus, though they have not yet conformed altogether. 585 [191]

Young persons under sixteen years of age are not married in Coorg. Exceptions from this wholesome rule are very rare. It is to be hoped that the Coorgs will ever be preserved from the misery of child-marriages. 582

A young Coorg, when about to marry, has first to obtain the consent of his father or of the head of the family. This affair being settled, the Aruva of the house is taken into the marriage-council. He has to speak to the Aruva of the family, to whom the desired bride belongs. These Aruvas hold an important office among the Coorgs. They act as representatives, counsels, guardians of families and individuals on the great occasions of life. A particular friend of a neighbouring Coorg house becomes its Aruva, and a member of this house is naturally the Aruva of the other. On a certain day the Aruva of the intending bridegroom, accompained by his father or elder brother, goes to the house of the young woman, who is to be asked in marriage. They speak to the Aruva and to the head of the house. A favourable answer being returned, the whole house is carefully swept and a lamp is lit. Some families, affecting new fashions, at this time call in the astrologers to see whether the stars of the new couple will agree together or not. Where no horoscope has been taken, the astrologers, never at a loss, find the stars by the names of the parties! It is to be supposed, that the wise seers generally return acceptable answers. However, this part of the marriage-proceedings is evidently an innovation. The old fashion is to light a lamp in the newly swept house; when the two Aruvas, with the heads of the respective families, stand before 584 624 584 178 • [787]

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584 it, (the bridegroom's Aruva and father, or elder brother, on
[178] one side, the bride's representatives on the other) and shake hands together, in token of an inviolable contract having been concluded, in the presence of the Divinity or sacred light of the house. Such engagements are rarely, if ever, broken. After the above preliminaries the time for the wedding is agreed upon. The nuptials are often postponed half a year, sometimes for a twelve-month, but generally the Coorg weddings come off during the months of April and May, when the rice-valleys are dry, and there is little work to be done.
[189] When the time approaches, the astrologer's counsel is asked for the choice of a propitious day. The relatives of the bride and the bridegroom are invited to the respective houses ten days before the wedding. Under the superintendence of the Aruvas they engage in the necessary preparations. The members of the respective families themselves are not expected to join in these labours. On the last day before the marriage all the families of the villages of the bride and bridegroom are summoned. Each house must send at least one male and one female representative. Now the wedding-sheds are finished; pigs are slaughtered and dressed; rice and vegetables are prepared. The whole company thus working together, join also in a good dinner provided for their guests by the principal parties interested. The Aruva of each house acts throughout as master of the ceremonies.

585 On the wedding day, at sun-rise, the two village commu-
574 nities, to which the bride and bridegroom belong, are in festive commotion. No house is permitted to absent itself from the general gathering. In the bridegroom's house the male guests, in the bride's house the female attendants, busy themselves with bathing, dressing and ornamenting the chief personage of the day, and in making every thing ready for a good Coorg-feast. The larger and fatter the pigs, the more abundant and strong the liquor, the greater will be the glory of

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

carry the bride with them. On her return to her former home, she is treated as unclean, her dress and ooo 585 783 ornaments are taken from her; she is not permitted to touch anything in the house, and is shut up like a woman after childbirth. In this seclusion the young woman is kept for a fortnight, or a month, or even two months, according to the wealth and respectability of the family. From that time she becomes free. She goes back to her new home, and may now return on a visit to her mother's house, whenever she likes, without fear of molestation. In Kiggattnád the Coorgs have conformed in some measure to Badaga (Canarese) customs. There the new couple first meet in the bride's house and are both of them welcomed by the relatives and other guests. Then the same ceremony is gone through in the bridegroom's house, whither the party repair in company. But the true Coorg-rites are strictly observed in Coorg proper, or the Méndalenád, i. e. the northern part, the highland-country. For Kiggattnád is in many more respects, than geographical position only, below Méndalenád. 585 179 [184]

It has been asserted, both by Lieutenant Connor and Dr. Moegling, that the married life of the Coorgs is disfigured by the extraordinary and pernicious system of Polyandry or rather communism of women in one house. Also Col. Wilks in his History of Mysore (Second Edition, Madras 1869.) asserts as "perfectly true" (Vol. II p. 102.) a similar statement, contained in Tippu's address to the Coorgs, which is given further on in the historical part. Upon a careful examination of the matter, I may state as a fact, that, whatever may have been the custom in bygone ages, there is no such thing now practised amongst the Coorgs as a "national rite." That a people without the restraint of a morality, based upon pure and holy religious principles and enlivened by divine grace, should live together, exposed to great temptations, without occasionally falling into grievous sin, is too much to expect 581 [595] [114] [178]

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d. Childbirth. 844

The birth of a child renders not only the mother of the 783
new born babe, but the whole house unclean and every one who may come in contact with them. This ceremonial uncleanness (Sútaka) lasts for 7 days, be the babe male or female. The mother is confined for 2 months to the house and not 846
expected to engage in any work, but to recover her strength and to devote herself entirely to her child. This singular custom no doubt greatly contributes to the general good health and vigour of the Coorg women. Daughters are not 842
much valued. They must be brought up and yet are destined 562
to be entirely alienated from the house by their marriage. Boys are the stay of families. As soon as a Coorg boy is 852
born, a little bow of a castor-oil-plant stick with an arrow, 562
made of a leafstalk of the same plant, is put into his little hands, and a gun fired at the same time in the yard. He is thus, at taking his first breath, introduced into the world as a future huntsman and warrior. This ceremony, however, has [178]
almost lost its meaning and ceases to be generally observed. On the 12th day after birth, the child is laid into the cradle 553
by the mother or grandmother, who on this occasion gives 846
the name, which in many instances is both well-sounding and significant: thus for boys—Belliappa (silver-father), Ponnappa (gold-father), Mandanna (the brother of the village-green); for girls—Púvakka (flower-sister), Muttakka (pearl-sister), Chinnawa (gold-mother).

The cradle, woven of slit bamboos and cane, and fitted 854
to be hung up for swinging, requires but a little trimming to render it as tidy as any fashionable berceaunette; at all events the little Kodagu smiles and sleeps in it as happy as a prince; and as his mother bends over her darling with overflowing [539]
love and happiness and hums the Coorg lullaby:—

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796 Náráyana" and the echo is taken up by succeeding caravans.
788 Near the summit there is an overhanging rock, called Bíma-
[791] kallu, which forms a sheltering abode for some fakirs during
[133] the festive season. The source of the river is enclosed by a stone basin, over which a small shrine of granite slabs is built. From this reservoir the pure water percolates into a tank of about 30 feet square, which by an outlet keeps the water to
[346] a level of 2½ feet. On two sides there are rough stone terraces scooped out of the hill side and above the third terrace on a dip of the hill there is a small square temple dedicated to Ganapati with a few huts close by for the abode of the residing Brahmin-pújáris.

[787] At the moment, fixed by the Astrologer, of the sun's entering into the sign of Libra, whether by day or by night, the pilgrim, who is anxious to experience the full power of the sin cleansing bath, must descend into the holy tank. With the approach of the hour an ever increasing multitude surrounds the tank, impatiently waiting for the propitious moment. Now the priest gives the sign and the living throng, old and young, men and women rush in wild confusion into the water, duck three times and drink as often of the water, and, on emerging, offer a small gift to the priests, who sit near the shrine, receive the money and pour some pure water over the devotee's head. Before leaving, most of the pilgrims fill a hollow reed (Wóte) with water from the sacred spring and carry it home for the benefit of their relatives, and for
796 purifying their wells. The effectual bathing season lasts for
788 a whole month but with decreasing virtue. From 8 to 15,000
178 pilgrims may annually visit Tala-Kávéri, but the interest in
793 the place seems to be on the decrease. The presiding Brah-
245 mins have secured some jungle for coffee cultivation in the neighbourhood of the temple, and the Coorgs complain, that the priests take greater care of their coffee gardens than of

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

178 788 796 993 245

their religious duties, and only lately some valuable portions of the Tala-Kávéri shrine were stolen!

The Kávéri-day is celebrated also in the Coorg houses by those who remain at home, and is considered as a high holiday.

796

Before sunrise, the mistress of the house early leaves her bed, goes to the cooking-room, takes a brass-dish, throws into it a handful of rice, and having spread it over the whole plate, puts a common lamp, which has been in daily use, into the centre. The burning lamp is surrounded with flowers gathered from a garden or the jungle. To these a fresh, young cucumber is added. Then a red handkerchief is placed behind the lamp. Upon the handkerchief one jewel of gold or silver is laid. The mistress perhaps takes the necklace from her own person on the occasion, which is considered the luckiest choice. Then a good mat is spread on the ground, and a tripod, which [352] serves the Coorgs for a dinner-table, placed upon the mat. Upon the tripod the woman sets the brass-plate with the rice, lamp, cloth and jewel. This done, she proceeds to bake little [252] cakes from a dough of rice-flour and plantains, well kneaded together on the preceding night, upon a stone-mould well heated. Three of these little cakes are added to the contents of the plate. Then she calls the inmates of the house. They all rise instantly, go straight into the kitchen, and fold their hands before the tripod, as in adoration. One of the men takes three or five of the fresh cakes and carries them down to the rice-fields. There he puts the cakes upon one of the bamboo sticks, which have been placed in every field on the preceding day, crowned with a bundle of Keibala creepers. The field next to the house is chosen for this offering. When the cakes are duly laid upon the top of the creeper-crowned pole, the man gives three great shouts and returns to the house. It is now about five o'clock. (The cakes are afterwards gathered by the Holeyas, who live in the neighbour-

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when the turn came to a certain house, the devoted victim made his escape into the jungle. The villagers, after an unsuccessful search, returned to the temple and said to the pújári: "Kalak-ádu" which has a double meaning viz. "Kalake," next year—"ádu," we will give, or "ádu", a goat: and thenceforth only scape-goats were offered. The devotees fast during the day. The he-goat is killed in the afternoon, the blood sprinkled upon a stone, and the flesh eaten. At night the Panikas dressed in red and white striped cotton cloths and their faces covered with metal or bark masks perform their demoniacal dances.

In Mercara-táluq in Ippanivolavádi and in Kádakéri in Hálerinád the villagers sacrifice a kóna or male-buffalo instead of a man. Tied to a tree in a gloomy grove near the temple, the beast is killed by a Méda who cuts off its head with a large knife, but no Coorgs are present at the time. The blood is spilled on a stone under a tree and the flesh eaten by the Médas.

In connection with this sacrifice there are peculiar dances performed by the Coorgs around the temple: the *Kombáta* or *horn-dance*, each man wearing the horns of a spotted deer or stag on his head; the *Piliáta* or *peacocks'-feather-dance*, the performers being ornamented with peacocks' feathers, and the *Chauriáta* or *yák-tail-dance*, during which the dancers, keeping time, swing yák tails. These ornaments belong to the temple, where they are kept.

In some cases where a particular curse is said by the Kanya to rest upon a house, stable or field, which can only be removed by an extraordinary sacrifice, the ceremony performed seems to be another relic of human sacrifices. The Kanya sends for some of his fraternity, the Panikas or Bannas, and they set to work. A pit is dug in the middle room of the house, or in the yard, or the stable, or the field, as the occasion may require. Into this one of the magicians des-

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

782 cends. He sits down in Hindu fashion, muttering mantras.
789 Pieces of wood are laid across the pit, and covered with earth
791 a foot or two deep. Upon this platform a fire of jack-wood
178 is kindled, into which butter, sugar, different kinds of grain, etc. are thrown. This sacrifice continues all night, the Panika sacrificer above, and his immured colleague below, repeating their incantations all the while. In the morning the pit is opened, and the man returns to the light of day. These sacrifices are called *Máranada bali* or *death-atonements*. They cost from 10 to 15 Rupees. Instead of a human being, a cock is sometimes shut up in the pit and killed afterwards.

789 In cases of sore afflictions befalling a whole gráma or nád
782 such as small-pox, cholera or cattle-disease, the ryots combine
753 to appease the wrath of *Mári-amma* by collecting contributions of pigs, fowls, rice, cocoanuts, bread, and plantains from the different houses, and depositing them at the Mandu; whence they are carried in a procession with tomtoms. In one basket there is some rice and the members of each house on coming out bring a little rice in the hand and, waving it round the head, throw it into the basket with the belief that the dreaded evil will depart with the rice. At last the offerings are put down on the nád boundary, the animals are killed, their blood is offered on a stone, the rice and basket are left, and the rest of the provisions consumed by the persons composing the procession. The people of the adjoining grámas or nádu repeat the same ceremony and thus the epidemic is supposed to be banished from the country. In still greater calamities a flock of sheep is driven from nád to nád and at last expelled from the country.

788 **a. Pilgrimages of the Coorgs within and outside**
789 **their own country.**
783

Besides the annual *Tale-Káveri festival* in October and the *Kuttadamma-játre* in April there is a large concourse of people in February during *Sivarátri* at *Herumálu* in Kiggat-

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211 figures are in grotesque attitudes, but remarkably well grouped
532 and closely resemble the sculptured reliefs of Halibeed.
172 In the top compartment there is occasionally a lamp and a Linga both on pedestals, and these insignia, together with the Basavas in the third frame, evidently denote the heroes as Linga worshippers and aliens from the present Coorgs, who know nothing about them; the Canarese Gaudas, in whose countries they are chiefly found, claim them as relics of their ancestors and annually present before these stones offerings of cakes and fruit. The dresses of all the figures represented are not in the Coorg but in the costume of Hindus of the scantiest clothing. Col. Wilks in his *History of Mysore* Vol. I. p. 15. explains the sculptured representations in the [795] three compartments thus: "The lowest describes the battle in which the hero was slain; the centre compartment represents him in the act of being conveyed to heaven between two celestial nymphs: in the uppermost he has arrived at the regions of bliss and is delineated as seated before the peculiar emblem of his religion—generally the lingum—for the practice of erecting monuments seems chiefly to belong to the sect of Siva."

211 In north and north-east Coorg similar stones, but with
178 simple and coarse sculptural figures are still erected by re-
766 lations of influential men who met with a violent death or were carried away by small-pox and cholera.

211 With the Coorgs it is the custom, to keep images of men
769 and women in Coorg costume chased in silver-plates in the *Keimatta*, which is a small square building near the house, in remembrance of their ancestors whose departed spirits are [326] there annually worshipped. These plates which are of little artistic merit are made by the country goldsmiths. Near the [775] *Kannana house*, on that fine hill slope opposite the Central [648] School in Mercara, there is a stone-slab with a picture in relief of a Coorg warrior. The stone is erected in the paddy

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654 his estate has been fixed by Government at the rate of three
648 annas per acre.
651

d. Abkári.

651 Abkári, or the revenue derived from the manufacture or
273 sale of intoxicating liquors and drugs, has, in spite of the best
(656) intentioned repressive measures of Government, proved a very expansive financial source, showing an increase of revenue since 1834, which indicates a most lamentable rate of consumption of spirituous liquors in so small a country:

Abkári revenue.

In 1834-35	Rs. 4,445.	In 1854-55	Rs. 20,022.
„ 1839-40	„ 17,409.	„ 1858-59	„ 32,266.
„ 1844-45	„ 15,646.	„ 1864-65	„ 140,491.
„ 1849-50	„ 25,983.	„ 1869-70	„ 75,146.

655 A Government Distillery having been erected at Fraserpet
273 and rented to licensed contractors who within its walls manufacture arrack of a certain strength and pay for the monopoly a still-head-duty; it is assumed, that no other native liquor is produced in the country; but there can be no doubt, that many ryots distil a superior article from rice for feasts and home-consumption in general; this practice is, of course, interdicted and punishable, but who dares to denounce trespassers!

273 In the Rájahs' times a few people only knew the secret
178 of distilling rice-brandy, and drinking was kept down by rules enforced in Coorg fashion, besides, it was dangerous in those days to get drunk; for if, according to the ancient adage "In vino veritas," there is truth in a bottle of wine, there must be a great deal of it in a bottle of brandy! Words spoken in an unguarded moment, if conveyed to head-quarters by one of the numerous channels of espionage, might cost the man his tongue, nose or head. There is no such fear now before the

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eyes of the Coorg inhabitants. They are prosperous, their climate favours the evil habit and drunkenness, in its very nature, is a growing vice. Moreover since the influx of so many European settlers in Coorg, the natives have become familiar with the strongest European drinks and the liquor dealers are not slow in improving their opportunities to the ruin of the people. Beer- wine- and brandy-shops are scattered over the country.

It is hard to say how Government ought to deal with this vital Abkári-question and what measures might be adopted, to stem the torrent of vice and ruin. The old barriers, raised against the moral and physical plague of drunkenness by the laws of Hindu religion and of caste, have been broken through and cannot be repaired. The system of Government monopoly appears at first sight most objectionable; yet the abolition of it would have consequences still more deplorable. There is one panacea and one only, against this, as against every other moral evil in individuals or nations—a renovation of moral life and strength through the Gospel. All else is quackery!

4. THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS.

It was not until the year 1862, that the wants of Coorg were sufficiently recognised, to induce Government to organize a regular establishment for the execution of Public Works in Coorg. A detachment of Sappers and Miners having been stationed in the Province since 1834, all the needful Public Works were carried out by them and after they had been withdrawn, an European Overseer took charge of the roads etc. The present effective establishment with an Executive Engineer (R. E.) at its head wants only funds to carry out large and important works, especially an iron bridge over the Kávéri with new highroads through Southeast Coorg into Mysore and Wynád.